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## Prospects for West German Foreign Policy

Submitted by the  
**DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

Concurred in by the  
**UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD**

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## PROSPECTS FOR WEST GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

### THE PROBLEM

To estimate the principal trends in West German foreign policy during the next two years or so.

### CONCLUSIONS

A. West German leaders are becoming increasingly impatient to adopt a more self-reliant, distinctively German, foreign policy. Conscious of their country's growing economic and military strength, they are eager to attain a more influential position within the Western Alliance and a greater share in the formulation of Western defense and nuclear policies. At the same time, they are anxious to impart momentum, if necessary on their own, toward the reunification of their country. Whatever the outcome of the national election this fall, we believe that during the next two years or so these tendencies will be reflected in a more assertive style and some differences of emphasis in foreign policy. Nevertheless, barring important external developments, the West German government will probably be constrained by practical considerations—notably the rigidity of the power relationship in Europe—from making any major changes in the basic lines of policy. (*Paras. 1-11*)

B. Specifically, we believe that West Germany will retain its present commitments in Europe and the Western Alliance for the period of this estimate, and will continue to depend on US nuclear power to protect the integrity of its borders and those of West Berlin. Though we expect sympathy to grow for de Gaulle's idea of "Europe for the Europeans," with some accompanying interest in a European nuclear force, West Germany's strong defense ties with the US will almost certainly prevent a significant shift away from present defense policy during the next two years or so. (*Paras. 12-19*)

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C. In policy toward the Communist world the new West German administration will be likely to make more vigorous attempts than its predecessor to take the initiative. This will almost certainly include further efforts to expand the West German position in Eastern Europe. It may also be reflected in moves to resolve the German question by direct discussions with the Soviet leaders and additional steps to "normalize" relations with East Germany. Yet substantial progress in any of these spheres is unlikely unless an important shift occurs in Soviet policy toward Germany; a marked acceleration in the trend toward independence or internal "liberalization" in Eastern Europe could also open up new opportunities for West Germany in the area. (Paras. 20-23)

D. Beyond the period of this estimate, we believe the potentiality for important changes in West German foreign policy will increase. In the event of rapid or fundamental changes outside Germany—e.g., in the Communist world or the Western Alliance—West German leaders may find themselves in a position to act independently in a way which would importantly affect the interests of their allies, favorably or adversely. For example, if the Soviets eventually are forced by events to reassess their position in Europe, this might open the way for a West German-Soviet agreement to resolve the German question at the expense of the East German regime and perhaps of Bonn's Western allies. Or future West German leaders might be tempted to seek to exploit popular frustration over the absence of visible movement toward reunification and might thus tend to revive German chauvinism and the appeal of a bolsterous and intolerant extremism.<sup>1</sup> (Paras. 26-28)

<sup>1</sup> The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, feels that this Conclusion does not adequately represent either the negative or positive possibilities over the longer term. In particular, it fails to note such possible favorable developments as a post-de Gaulle softening of French opposition toward European integration, significant progress toward reunification consistent with US interests in a changed international context, continuing economic prosperity, and especially the attraction of a strong political-military tie to the US. Moreover, the Conclusion omits such critically important adverse possibilities (mentioned in Para. 27) as major disturbances in Alliance relations, which could cause Bonn to reopen fundamental questions of defense policy.

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## DISCUSSION

### I. GENERAL

1. West Germany is in a period of growing restiveness over foreign policy. Increasingly, West Germans are finding that the assumptions and goals of the Adenauer era are no longer appropriate to changing world conditions, and they are raising searching questions about the future. In the days of Adenauer the principal objectives of foreign policy were to contain Communist expansionism and to cooperate with the Western powers in the rebuilding of Western Europe and the creation of an integrated defensive alliance. Partly because some of Adenauer's objectives were attained and partly because the nature of German problems has changed, foreign policy objectives under Erhard are much more difficult to define. The Germans themselves, government and people alike, have not succeeded in defining them. This is a period of search for new definitions and new formulas.

2. West Germany has long since passed the phase of postwar reconstruction. It is now a major economic power and a major partner in the Western Alliance. Its economy is thriving and growing at a rapid rate.<sup>2</sup> It makes a larger contribution to the conventional defensive forces of the Western Alliance than any other European power. Conscious of this growing strength, West Germans desire more and more to exercise appropriately greater influence within the Alliance. Members of a new generation are beginning to acquire positions of influence; increasingly these people, and especially the younger generation after them, are coming to resent being identified with the Nazi regime, and feel that now, some 20 years after World War II, they should be entitled to look to the future instead of being incessantly embroiled in the past.

3. At the same time, West Germans are becoming increasingly aware that in changing world circumstances the interests of their country and those of their major allies do not always coincide. There is growing impatience over what is regarded as excessive dependence on others in foreign policy, especially in areas not of major importance to West Germany. Indeed, what is happening is a burgeoning of nationalist feeling, not in the sense associated with the Nazi or even earlier periods, but in the sense that West Germans now desire that their government should follow a more self-reliant, distinctively German, policy. In this they are influenced by the example of de Gaulle.

4. As the Germans look eastward, the Communist world no longer presents so menacing an image as it did in the Adenauer era. There is less sense of immediate threat, and more awareness of opportunities developing from the rifts and ferment within the Communist world. The Bonn government has

<sup>2</sup> In 1964 the economy achieved a real GNP growth rate of seven percent, which doubled that of the previous year. Full employment is being maintained, and Bonn expects a growth rate this year almost as high as last. West Germans have never enjoyed such prosperity.

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taken steps to establish a modest position in Eastern Europe, in the form of trade missions, which it hopes will be a wedge for greater influence. Meanwhile, German concern over the division of the country, which has been present from the beginning, has become more evident and increased in intensity ever since the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Though most Germans realize that the likelihood of reunification is remote, they still wish to be assured that progress toward the common goal is not being shirked. Many West Germans have since concluded that in a situation of nuclear stalemate they could not rely on their allies to make the desired progress for them, but would have to take steps on their own. Largely in response to the initiatives of Willy Brandt, a number of "small steps" have been taken by the Bonn government to improve contacts with East Germans. In general, West Germans are convinced of the necessity to maintain movement in eastern policy, lest they give the impression that they accept the *status quo* and are no longer particularly interested in the reunification of their country.

5. Nevertheless, there are still very strong factors which restrict West German independent initiatives. Despite the diminished sense of immediate threat, the West Germans remain greatly concerned over the vulnerability of their eastern border. Their desire to have strong US military forces stationed on German soil for protection is as firm as ever; indeed, there is great sensitivity to any suggestion that the US might withdraw even small units of its forces. There is now a close and complex relationship between the armed forces of West Germany and the US which would inhibit rapid or radical changes in defense policy and planning. Another limitation upon independent action is the growing practical involvement of West Germany in the Common Market and other West European cooperative endeavors. Other factors which inhibit change in foreign policy or divert attention from it are domestic prosperity, growing social and economic integration in German society, and the consensus of responsible leaders in both major political parties on the main outlines of West German foreign policy.

#### Implications of the 1965 Election

6. West Germany is now preparing for a national election to be held on 19 September 1965, the outcome of which could have a significant effect on the style and emphasis of foreign policy during the next year or two. The most likely outcome, we believe, is that the German electorate will return to power an administration led by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian affiliate, the Christian Social Union (CSU), which, as now, is likely to depend for its majority on coalition with the Free Democratic Party (FDP). In any case, the Adenauer-Strauss wing of the CDU/CSU will probably renew its pressure for a more "European" orientation in policy. A substantially reduced plurality would probably be interpreted by the party leaders as calling for a more assertive leadership. Fighting for survival, the small FDP has already chosen to press for a more radical policy, especially toward the east, as the main plank of its electoral platform.

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7. However, for the first time in its history the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has a chance of gaining a plurality, which would entitle it to try to form a government. If it succeeded, it would be equally inclined to seek to revitalize West Germany's policies. The SPD leaders probably would interpret an election victory as a mandate for a more energetic policy toward the Communist world. Especially toward East Germany, an SPD administration probably would feel relatively unencumbered by previous practices and principles such as the Hallstein Doctrine.<sup>2</sup> It probably would develop closer ties with the East Germans and in time possibly even with the Communist regime. Many of the present problems would remain in relations with West Germany's European allies, although the SPD leaders have close connections with fellow Socialists, especially in the Scandinavian countries.

8. It is possible, though much less likely, that a "grand coalition" will be formed between the CDU/CSU and the SPD after the election. In such an event, the administration will possess an overwhelming parliamentary majority, so that there will be a greater surface appearance of stability in foreign policy. Nevertheless, even such a government would be subjected to increased pressure for a new, more independent style in policy. Competition and maneuver between and within the two parties would continue. If the FDP were excluded from effective influence over national policy, it could become a focus for discontented radicals and nationals. Such an opposition would probably try to rally support by exhuming and reviving German grievances which have accumulated since World War II—e.g., alleged unpunished Allied "war crimes," and the division of Germany at Allied hands. This kind of appeal would be likely to evoke some popular response, but we do not think it would have an important effect on foreign policy for the next few years.

## II. THE OUTLOOK FOR FOREIGN POLICY

### General Considerations

9. We believe that the outcome of the election, whatever it may be, is unlikely to bring about fundamental change in West German foreign policy during the next few years. West German leaders will try to adopt at least the appearance of a more independent line, so that changes in style and emphasis can be expected. But for some years the Federal Republic will be constrained by practical considerations—notably the rigidity of the power relationship in Europe—from making radical changes in the substance of its policy. Only in the event of important developments outside Germany would an important shift in West German foreign policy be likely to occur during the period of this estimate.

10. Popular sentiment in West Germany does not now actively favor fundamental changes in policy. Quite the contrary, most West Germans are pre-occupied with the enjoyment of their unprecedented prosperity; their principal

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<sup>2</sup>The Hallstein Doctrine calls for the severance of relations with any nation, other than the USSR, which recognizes East Germany.

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concern is to protect it. Foreign policy does not figure importantly as an election issue. To be sure, there is widespread popular disapproval of Erhard's "bumbling," in contrast to Adenauer's firm and decisive leadership, but, for the most part, there is general approval of the present orientation of foreign policy. No organized element now exists in German society with the disruptive influence which characterized the militarist and big business blocs of Weimar days. Foreign policy in West Germany now is principally the concern of politicians and "opinion moulders," who know which issues are likely to evoke popular response in support of particular policy lines.

11. Reunification is of special significance. Additional interest in this issue has been stimulated recently in connection with the election campaign. Each of the political parties tries to manipulate it to its own advantage. Willy Brandt has used his position as Governing Mayor of West Berlin to exploit it on behalf of his party. The FDP leaders have staked their political future on a play for a more active policy toward reunification. The Erhard administration feels compelled to appear to be trying to make progress toward the goal. Though there is currently no widespread popular demand for an immediate solution, reunification nevertheless remains the key national issue in Germany. Active interest could be greatly intensified if it appeared to Germans on both sides of the border that there were improved practical possibilities for achieving it.

#### **Relations with the Major Western Allies**

12. We believe that West Germany will remain committed to an "Atlantic" orientation for the period of this estimate, will maintain close ties with the US and with its other NATO allies, and will continue to press for increasingly close economic and political ties among the Common Market countries. At a minimum, the continued need and desire for US protection of West Germany and West Berlin will prevent any significant shift in the next few years.

13. At the same time, West German leaders are confronted with a dilemma arising from the fact that close ties with France are also essential to Germany's goals in Europe and to further progress toward European integration. We believe that there will be growing sympathy among West German leaders for de Gaulle's idea of "Europe for the Europeans." This tendency will be especially significant if, as a result of the 1965 election, the "Gaullist" wing of the CDU/CSU acquires greater influence within the government. But we believe that any Bonn government will seek to avoid situations which require a choice between the US and France. In the event of an administration led by the CDU, de Gaulle will continue to exert a strong influence over German policy since he can create serious difficulties for West German policymakers, especially in inter-allied relations, and can deepen divisions within the CDU/CSU itself. An administration dominated by the SPD would probably be less sympathetic to de Gaulle but still it could not avoid being preoccupied with his actions. Relations with France will therefore probably be troubled, regardless of which party holds power after the election.

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14. Relations with the UK will probably continue to be hampered by basic differences on key issues, though intermittent atmospheric improvement may be expected, since both governments have an interest in bettering their relationship. Various differences between the two countries will surface from time to time, the most profound of which will concern Germany's role in Europe and in the Western Alliance. West German leaders believe that Britain does not support their national interests (e.g., on reunification) and is lukewarm toward German aspirations for a larger role in NATO councils. In the event that the West German election should bring an SPD administration into power, relations with the Labour Government probably will improve somewhat, since there are some close personal ties between individuals in the two parties. Improvement would also result from progress toward a mutually satisfactory version of the Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF) proposed by the British, or a suitable alternative.

#### **Defense and Nuclear Policies**

15. We believe that West Germany's heavy reliance on US protection will remain the heart of its defense and nuclear policies. The West Germans will continue to urge, however, that the present US strategy of "flexible response" be interpreted to allow almost immediate use of nuclear weapons for the protection of West German territory. West German leaders will also press for a larger voice in the determination of NATO defensive strategy and in the control of the West's nuclear deterrent.

16. This continuing concern was an important factor in the discussion of the proposal for a Multilateral Nuclear Force (MLF); it continues to operate in the discussion of nuclear defense arrangements which now centers upon the Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF). The outlook for agreement on such a force is not bright, partly because of British-German differences, but particularly because the Germans and others are anxious to avoid a confrontation with de Gaulle over the question. If there is no progress on current proposals, German policymakers will probably look for other sharing arrangements; failure to achieve any form of sharing may lead them eventually to consider alternative nuclear policies.

17. Some leading West German politicians—e.g., Adenauer, Strauss, and Krone—have expressed themselves as favoring the development of a European nuclear force. Such individuals sympathize with de Gaulle's stated view that the US cannot be relied upon indefinitely to come to Europe's defense in a crisis. They advance the argument that the credibility of the Western nuclear deterrent would be enhanced by the presence in Western Europe of a nuclear force under European control, incorporating the French *force de frappe*. If as a result of the West German election the "Gaullist" wing of the CDU/CSU should obtain a more influential position, the government may come under some pressure to explore the possibilities of this scheme. We believe, however, that the West German leadership in the main does not regard the creation of such a force as a realistic objective. Perhaps more important, most German leaders

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would continue to consider essential the intimate involvement of the US in any nuclear arrangement.

18. A bilateral French-German arrangement for nuclear defense is highly unlikely during the period of this estimate. The Germans will not want to jeopardize their close relationship with the US by such an arrangement, and in any case, we believe that de Gaulle will not permit the Germans a meaningful share in a joint nuclear program. Considerable cooperation already exists between the two countries in various military fields (though far less than that between West Germany and the US), but we have no evidence of any collaboration relating to nuclear weapons. It is possible that the Germans, in return for some important advantage, would agree to a French request for financial support for the *force de frappe*. We doubt this, because we see no adequate advantage which the West Germans would be likely to receive from the French at present that would compensate for the risk of undermining Germany's relations with the US.

19. We believe that there is little disposition in West Germany at present to acquire a national nuclear weapons capability. Over the next several years, to the extent that their desires for a greater role appear to the Germans to be frustrated, sentiment for an independent nuclear capability will probably increase to some extent. But all responsible West German leaders at present reject such a course, and there continue to be strong political factors, including the Bonn government's treaty commitments, which deter West Germans from a national nuclear weapons program. We believe it highly unlikely that they will begin to develop such a program during the period of this estimate.

#### Relations with the Communist World

20. Whatever the outcome of the 1965 election, we believe that the new administration in Bonn will try to develop initiatives in eastern policy, if necessary independently of its Western allies. It will continue to urge its allies to press the Soviets to abandon their rigid opposition to reunification. If the allies prove unresponsive to this pressure, or if their efforts are blocked by the Soviets, West German leaders will intensify their exploration of alternative approaches to the problem. This might result in direct talks with the Soviets, further moves to improve the German position in Eastern Europe, or additional moves to normalize West German relations with East Germany; or it could result in all three together. There will probably be a continuing tendency to look for practical accommodations of policy regardless of political restrictions—such as agreements for greater movement of Germans in both directions across the zonal border. An SPD administration would probably accelerate implementation of such a policy, especially if its coalition partner were the activist FDP.

21. But Bonn's eastern policy operates under severe constraints, and unless important external developments should occur, we believe that progress will not be spectacular. A fundamental change in Soviet policy toward Germany

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would at any time be likely to find positive response in Bonn, but we see no prospect of such a change during the period of this estimate. West German progress toward rapprochement with East Germany probably will be limited, at least to the extent that the Soviets regard it as likely to endanger the stability of the Communist regime. We expect further West German steps to improve relations, despite repeated demonstration of the Communist intention to use these steps to enhance the status of the East German regime at Bonn's expense.

22. In Eastern Europe, it is conceivable that sudden developments—for example, a marked acceleration of the trend toward independence or toward internal liberalization—could open up new opportunities for enhancing West German influence in the area, which any West German administration would be quick to exploit. But in the absence of such developments, we believe that the West German government will continue to improve its relations with these countries at a gradual pace. Issues such as the Oder-Neisse question continue to present serious obstacles to the normalization of Bonn's relations with Eastern Europe. The impression continues to prevail in the countries of this area that the West Germans still have designs on their former eastern territories.

23. Policy toward China is another area where Bonn will probably attempt a more assertive line than in the past. The Bonn government, under whatever leadership, probably will be less deterred by US susceptibilities than its predecessor in establishing trade relations with Peiping. Bonn's principal interest in such a tie is that it may be able to obtain a trade agreement with China including a Berlin clause, which Bonn could use in its maneuvering against the Ulbricht regime.<sup>4</sup> Trade considerations are secondary, but not unimportant. To some extent Bonn will be influenced by the example of de Gaulle. However, the West Germans seem to believe that such actions will not be construed by the US as a major break in Western solidarity.

#### Policy Toward Other Areas

24. West Germany's national interests are less directly involved in other areas of the world, and Bonn's foreign policy is less actively engaged in these areas. But the government and West German business interests are greatly interested in trade with the underdeveloped world, and the West Germans have developed a fairly extensive economic aid program. Bonn's major concern with respect to these areas is to maintain its position as the sole spokesman for the German people, and to sustain the diplomatic isolation of the Ulbricht regime. However, this policy, which is epitomized by the Hallstein Doctrine, has become increasingly difficult to maintain as more and more nations, many of them newly independent, have been subjected to Communist pressure and influence. Recent troubles with Indonesia, Tanzania, and the UAR have caused West German

<sup>4</sup> The Berlin clause refers to the inclusion of West Berlin in the area covered by the trade agreement. The East German regime maintains that West Berlin has no legitimate tie to the Federal Republic.

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...to place this policy principle under searching examination. They are divided over whether to retain it, abandon it, or modify it.

West German policy toward the Middle East, an area of more than ordinary German interest, has been greatly complicated by Bonn's involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, largely as a result of its peculiar relationship with France. Adenauer's handling of all the problems arising out of the Ulbricht visit to Cairo and Bonn's halting of military aid to Israel was widely criticized by the West German public as extremely inept diplomacy, and he eventually responded to pressure for a harder line against the Arabs. It is widely believed in West Germany that one of the basic causes of its troubles in the Middle East was the Adenauer practice of following US policy guidance, notably in the 1950 arms agreement with Israel; West German policy in the Middle East is now likely to reflect specifically German political and economic interests to a greater degree than before. Bonn is no longer likely to apply a uniform policy to the Arab countries, and the complexities of the problem may result in at least some modification of the Hallstein Doctrine. More broadly, recent events will probably increase West German wariness toward political commitments, or military sides, in disputes, in regions of tension outside the area of NATO.

#### III. LONGER RANGE POSSIBILITIES

16. Though we have estimated that no important changes in West German foreign policy are likely during the next two years or so, we believe that developments in the world situation will considerably increase the potentiality for change after that. For many years Bonn's foreign policy was relatively quiescent and largely dependent on the foreign policies of others, but in recent years it has begun to move, and in years to come we expect it to gather momentum. On the other hand, habits of constitutional government, which have found roots over the past 20 years, should tend to impede sudden shifts in foreign policy without careful governmental reflection and considerable national debate. Other factors inhibiting sudden change are West Germany's deep-seated fear of the Soviet Union and its intense drive for reconciliation with Western Europe.

17. But in the event of rapid or fundamental change outside Germany—e.g., in the USSR, in Sino-Soviet or US-Soviet relations, Eastern Europe, the EEC, or NATO—West German leaders may find themselves in a position to take independent action in a way which would have an important effect on the interests of their allies, either favorable or adverse. If the Soviets are eventually forced by events to reassess their position in Europe, this might open the way for a West German-Soviet agreement to resolve the German question at the expense of the East German regime and perhaps of Bonn's Western allies. A

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major disruption of the Western Alliance—for example, through a French decision to leave NATO—could cause the West Germans to reassess their entire position on defense policy. Evidence that the US intended to bring about a substantial reduction of its commitments in Europe would certainly cause such a reassessment, and strong domestic pressure might then arise for the adoption of a national nuclear weapons program.

28. External developments could also affect opinion inside West Germany in a way which would not be to the advantage of the US or Bonn's other allies. Future West German leaders might be tempted to seek to exploit popular frustration over the absence of visible movement toward reunification and might thus tend to revive German chauvinism and the appeal of a boisterous and intolerant extremism. It is also possible that external events could cause neutralist feeling in West Germany to grow. In time, and especially if the sense of direct Soviet threat to Western Europe continues to diminish, the West Germans' conviction that NATO is essential for their security could weaken. Conceivably even the necessity for the continued presence of American forces on German soil might eventually be put in question.

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